Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
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Lack of Movement on Federal Commitment to 5 Wing Goose Bay Unacceptable

The absence of progress on the Federal Government's promise to expand military operations at 5 Wing Goose Bay shows disdain for the people of Labrador, says the Honourable John Hickey, Minister of Labrador Affairs.

"It is time the Federal Government faced up to its responsibility and started making good on commitments to Newfoundland and Labrador," said Minister Hickey, in response to news of a recent meeting in Ottawa between the town council of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

"While I applaud the Happy Valley-Goose Bay town council for arranging a meeting with our province's federal cabinet representative, I am troubled that there has been no significant movement on 5 Wing Goose Bay, just as I am troubled that Minister Hearn has yet to set foot on Labrador soil," said Minister Hickey. "A commitment by the Federal Government to place a 650-manned rapid reaction army battalion and a new long-range unstaffed aerial vehicle squadron has not been carried out. This is not acceptable. To not meet this commitment in a timely manner would be nothing less then a betrayal to the people of Labrador."

It is anticipated the Federal Government will soon release its long-awaited defence strategy. Minister Hickey said the strategy should see Prime Minister Stephen Harper follow through on the commitment to 5 Wing Goose Bay, which he made in a letter to the Honourable Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, dated January 4, 2006.

"5 Wing Goose Bay has the world-class facilities, it has the needed infrastructure, and it has the people of Labrador supporting the developments committed to by Prime Minister Harper," said Minister Hickey. "With our low-lying mountains and vast acres of unoccupied forest, virtually any condition or real-life situation can be simulated in central Labrador."

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